

# **EU staff and professionals' studies: where are we and where do we go?**

15 May 2023

## **Part I. New Perspectives and Methods (chair: Martin Westlake)**

Panel 1: HOW TO CAPTURE THE EU PROFESSIONAL FIELD?

**The realities of European careers. The value of sequence analysis.** Sébastien Michon

**EU elites' constellation: what has changed between 2015 and 2020?** Didier Georgakakis

Cette communication rend compte d'un travail prosopographique en cours visant à comparer les 200 *leaders* des institutions européennes (commissaires, députés, directeurs d'administration et représentants permanents) dans l'optique de comparer deux configurations institutionnelles et politiques. La première, ouverte par Jean-Claude Juncker autour de la thématique de la *politisation* puis la seconde, ouverte par Ursula Van Der Leyen autour de la Commission *géopolitique*. Observe-t-on des différences dans les personnels dirigeants de l'Union européenne ? Si oui lesquels ? La politisation a-t-elle été l'occasion d'un renforcement du capital politique des leaders européens, ou au contraire d'un tassement de ce capital au profit d'un cercle restreint de dirigeants ? Dans quelle mesure, de la même manière, la thématique de la Commission géopolitique induit-elle une rupture par rapport aux configurations sociales et politiques dessinées par ces leaders ?

**Analysing European civil society networks,** Luis Bouza García

Networks and networking are frequent references in studies of the EU that seek to explain decision making and policy outcomes beyond institutional agendas. Networks are usually associated with policy learning, circulation of information and collective action. However, the notion of networking is used as a metaphor for general phenomena of resource exchange and alliances between civil society, instead as an analytical framework. This contribution explores the usage of Social Network Analysis as a way of operationalizing several conceptual and theoretical issues about the role of civil society in the field of eurocracy. It does so by comparing different approaches centered upon different kinds of civil society organizations to highlight the potential for exploring the limits of the field and different forms of capital and concludes with a critical reflection about the limitations of the approach and the need to complement it with individual biographical data.

Panel 2: UNDERSTANDING EUROPEAN ELITES THROUGH THEIR CONNECTIONS

**“Porous bureaucracies”. A relational approach to the administrative staff of the institutions** Hussein Kassim, Sara Connolly

The EU institutions and the people who work for them are often considered remote and unresponsive. While the European Commission is depicted as a distant technocracy, the Council Secretariat is viewed as secretive and introspective. This article puts these assumptions to the empirical test and finds against the accepted wisdoms. Drawing on two original datasets, it maps patterns of interaction with external actors for both parts of the EU administration. It shows not only that the European Commission and Council Secretariat are in constant contact with outside actors, but that their preferences about whether decision-making authority should be located at the EU or at national level are affected, even if the governance preferences of staff in the Council Secretariat are less influenced.

**A historical perspective on the study of European elites: the making of EMU through the lens of prosopography and network analysis** Emmanuel Mourlon-Druol

This presentation will first briefly take stock of how the historiography of European cooperation and integration has considered the study of European elites so far. Then it will turn to outlining three works in progress within the framework of my ERC project EURECON on the making of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) from 1957 to 1992, in order to stimulate discussion about the challenges related to the study of European elites. First, Alexis Drach and myself have analysed the making of EMU through the prism of the European Commission’s division of economic and monetary affairs (DG II). Our article analyses the education and career trajectories of the 149 DG II civil servants (as reported in the Commission’s annuaires), as well as their connections with other institutions. Second, I have completed a prosopography of the Banking Advisory Committee (1979-1992, 102 individuals), itself part of a wider set of explorations into the study of elites in several EMU-related EEC committees. The aim of this study is to uncover which dynamics were specific to the milieu of banking regulators and supervisors, as opposed to economic coordination more broadly. Third, I use network analysis to study how the different elites involved in EMU discussions were connected with each other, and what this tells us about the making of EMU. For the period under consideration, this means up to up to eleven committees (Committee of Governors, Monetary Committee, Short-Term and Medium-Term Economic Policy Committees, Budgetary Policy Committee, Economic Policy Committee, Banking Advisory Committee, European Council, Council of Finance Ministers,

European Parliament's Committee on economic affairs and European Economic and Social Committee). Taken together, these three works in progress highlight how the use of prosopography and network analysis can uncover trends that would otherwise remain either invisible or difficult to provide evidence on.

**Production and consecration of experts in the field of European politics using the example of political economy European Expert Groups 1966-2018** Christian SCHMIDT-WELLENBURG

European expertise is an effect of the field of European politics, opens up access to sources of knowledge and authority beyond the political context and varies depending on the state of European integration. This can be exemplified by a prosopography of members of political economic European Expert Groups (1966-2018). A multiple correspondence analysis of 261 professional careers allows to reconstruct the structure of European expertise in this policy area, to determine six types of experts by clustering, and in the light of the observed diversity to trace the decline of scientific and the increase of financial expertise. This development can be interpreted as a strengthening of the economic-heteronomous pole in the field, which goes hand in hand with the rise of neoliberal forms of government, the autonomisation of the field, and the professionalisation of expert consultations.

**Book presentation:** Sebastian BÜTTNER will present the book: **"Sociology of Europeanization"** he co-edited together with Monika EIGMÜLLER and Susann WORSCHER (2022).

**16 May 2023**

**Part II. Emerging issues and fields (chair: Didier Georgakakis)**

If political and administrative personnel became very quickly a recurrent subject in studies on the European Union, the latter have been renewed by new fields that integrate the different concentric circles (Bourdieu speaks of "supernumeraries") of actors working in connection with and often for the institutions. These include lawyers who move between firms and institutions, consultants or European programmes' engineers who act as relays for European policies in the territories, and women or administrators in the Parliament - all actors who seemed largely absent from the first studies. The purpose of this section is therefore to highlight these new perspectives.

Panel 1: FROM CRISIS MANAGEMENT TO THE ROUTINE OF EU POLICYMAKING: WHO ARE THE EXPERTS?

**Developing expertise on structural reforms in EU Member States, Marylou Hamm**

How has the European management of the "Greek crisis" paved the way for a comprehensive expertise on Member States' reforms? This communication questions the development of technical assistance from a crisis to a routine instrument within the European Commission. After having demonstrated the importance of the macroeconomic adjustment programs in the development of a transversal technical assistance service called DG REFORM, I will present the major tensions that structured its institutionalisation. The analysis focuses on the way senior EU officials at the heart of the internal decision-making process engaged in the management of Greek crisis conceive EU expertise: its organisation, priorities and value. My presentation is based on the joint study of in-depth interviews, internal and official documents, all focusing on the European Commission as the central locus for the development of technical assistance for all Member States.

**Elite Fidelity in the European Crisis Management Regime, Cornel Ban**

How policy elites occupy positions within broader governance architectures is important in understanding how crisis management regimes are produced to respond to macroeconomic woes. We examine the crisis management regime forged to address Europe's recent economic crisis and the policy elites holding top management positions in the supranational economic governance bodies constituting this European crisis management regime: the European Central Bank, European Fund for Strategic Investments, the European Investment Bank, and the European Stability Mechanism. The career and educational characteristics of elites embroiled in this "command situation" are

examined, as is their location in elite policy networks. In contrast to many studies of contemporary elites wielding political and economic power, we find that below the very top tier Europe's policy elites have conventional careers with little public-private mobility or high-end educational prestige. Furthermore, these elites have 'fidelity' in staying with public organizations. Coherence in the European crisis management regime reflects these characteristics, which then combines with regional power asymmetries. Our findings suggest that studies of elites must carefully consider regional characteristics so as to not over-generalize elites as Ivy League educated transnational pragmatists who float between private and public realms.

### **The project world of EU funding: A distinct area of EU expertise?**, Sebastian BÜTTNER

The logic of project management constitutes an important element of policy implementation in EU policymaking; it substantially influences the way EU policies are implemented all over the EU territory and beyond. In this contribution the emergence, major cultural logics, and sociological implications of project-based EU funding policy will be discussed in more detail. It is argued that EU funding constitutes an own field of expertise, a distinct transnationally organized 'project world', so to speak, with specific standards, regulations, practical conventions, and even a particular rhetoric. This brings about an increasing "expertization" of EU policymaking fostering the expansion of projectified imperatives and specialized organizations and occupations in public policy and creating new hierarchies and social distinctions within the structures of EU policy implementation.

### Panel 2: DIVING INTO EUROPEAN CAREERS

#### **Europe and its lawyers, a sociology of careers**, Lola Avril

My presentation will focus on the study of the role of lawyers in the European integration process. First, I will present a critical literature review on the relationship between Law and the EU. More specifically, I will show how early legal and political science scholarship has narrowed the study of law to the study of the judgments of the CJEU, making this institution and EU judges the only producers of law and establishing a positive relation between European law on the one hand and the deepening of European integration on the other. The second part of my presentation will draw on my own research as well as other young political scientists and legal scholars. It will show how political sociology has reshaped our understanding of the role of private practitioners in the EU.

## **The development of staff resources in the European Parliament**, Andreja Pegan

The focus in this paper are the staff that assist members of parliament in carrying out their tasks in legislation, representation and the scrutiny of the executive. These include the personal assistants of parliamentarians, party group staff, the in-house staff of parliaments, trainees and contracted service providers. The paper provides a systematic review and critical evolution of the scholarly knowledge of their tasks, behaviours and attitudes. The focus is on the European Parliament as the best-staffed legislature in Europe. The systematic review also examines the literature on staff in other parliaments and provides comparisons to understand the relevance of the scholarly work on the European Parliament. What issues and methods have been covered and employed to study staff at parliament so far? To what extent are there similarities and differences in how parliament staff are studied? What motives drive the study of staff in parliament? What are the study gaps and potential lacunas that bring relevance to the study of parliamentary staff at present and in the future?

## **The Political Careers of Women in the European Parliament**, Elena Frech

The European Parliament represents all European citizens and has increased its power dramatically over the past four decades. However, we know little about the career paths of the members of the European Parliament (MEPs), and even less about the political careers of women and the impact on children. In this presentation, I shed some light on the careers of the still under-represented women MEPs, asking: do the political careers of women MEPs differ systematically from those of their male colleagues, and if so how? Furthermore, I will discuss the impact of children on the political careers of women. Based upon a newly collected dataset on the entire career of all MEPs 2009-2021 and a recent survey among MEPs as well as Interviews, I analyze typical career patterns in every career phase – pre-parliamentary experience, success and behavior in the EP and the exit from the EP with post-parliamentary career. I show how these careers differ between men and women MEPs as a whole and in every career phase. Furthermore, I show that small children affect the careers of mothers differently from fathers in the EP.

## The speakers.

### **Lola AVRIL, University of Eastern Finland**

Lola Avril is a Research Associate at the University of Eastern Finland. She is an Max Weber Alumni (EUI), a founding member of the Research Group on the European Union (grue) in France and member of the steering committee of the History of European Integration Research Society (HEIRS). Her research interests lie at the intersection of the history of European law, European public policy analysis and the sociology of intermediaries in the European Union political system. She is the author of various publications, notably "Passer à l'Europe. Logiques et formes de l'investissement des premiers Euro-lawyers dans les politiques européennes" (Politique européenne, 2020) and « Pour une sociohistoire de l'État régulateur européen. Du gouvernement administratif à la régulation judiciairisée de la concurrence (1962-1982) » (Revue française de science politique, 2020).

### **Cornel BAN, Copenhagen Business School**

Cornel Ban is an associate professor of International Political economy at Copenhagen Business School, currently conducting research on growth regimes, the role of state and finance in decarbonization and the political economy of industrial policy. His research interests focus on the politics of economic expertise, policy shifts in international financial institutions and the politics of capitalist diversity. His book (*Ruling Ideas: How Neoliberalism Goes Local*, Oxford University Press, 2016) received the political economy award for 2017 of the British International Studies Association.

### **Luis BOUZA GARCÍA, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid**

Luis Bouza García teaches political science at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid and is a member of the openeudebate Jean Monnet network. He was the Academic Coordinator of European General Studies courses of the College of Europe in Bruges between 2012 and 2018. His main field of interest is the emergence of European debates in the public sphere. He is the author of *participatory Democracy Civil Society in the EU: Agenda-Setting and Institutionalisation* (Palgrave Macmillan).

### **Sebastian BÜTTNER, University of Kassel**

Sebastian Büttner is a senior lecturer of sociological theory and cultural sociology at the Institute of Sociology, Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nürnberg (FAU), Germany. Currently he is interim professor of macrosociology at the University of Kassel,

Germany. His research focuses on Europeanization and transnationalization processes, the sociology of knowledge and knowledge society, the changing modes of political and societal government, and regionalism and regionalization in Europe. He is the author of *Mobilizing Regions, Mobilizing Europe: Expert Knowledge and Scientific Planning in European Regional Development* (2014), and has recently co-edited a text book *Sociology of Europeanization* (2022).

### **Sarah CONNOLLY, University of East Anglia**

Sarah Connolly is Professor of Personnel Economics at Norwich Business School, University of East Anglia, and is currently participating in an ESRC-funded project "Work, Learning, and Wellbeing". Her research interests cover employment and personal wellbeing. Other current projects include studies of careers, employee engagement and management in the EU civil service. She has published extensively on these topics, including the book *The European Commission of the Twenty-First Century* she co-edited in 2013.

### **Elena FRECH, University of Bamberg**

Elena Frech is a post-doctoral researcher within the research project "Coordination Committees as Parliamentary Agenda Setter" (cocopas) at the university of Bamberg (Germany). Her research interests lie in the broad areas of comparative political institutions, European parliamentary politics and behaviors, parties, political careers, representation and gender, and international political economy including public opinion, and multi-level governance. She is the author of *re-Selecting Members of the European Parliament*, a book on party goals and candidate selection for the European Parliament elections in Germany.

### **Didier GEORGAKAKIS, College of Europe**

Didier Georgakakis is the Academic Coordinator of the European General Studies programme (Bruges) and a visiting professor in Bruges. He is Professor of political science at University Paris1-Panthéon Sorbonne where he holds a Jean Monnet Chair and chairs the master's degree in European public affairs and the joint ENA/Paris 1 master's degree in international and European policies. His research focuses on the professionals of EU policies and governance and transdisciplinary perspectives on EU integration and transnational social fields. He is the author of *The Euro-civil service in (times of) crisis. The changing power of Eurocrats* (Palgrave 2017). He co-edited *The field of eurocracy*,



mapping EU staff and professionals (2012/2013) or the Political uses of governance. Looking back to a white paper (2012).

### **Hussein KASSIM, University of East Anglia**

Hussein Kassim is Professor of Politics at the University of East Anglia. His research examines four main areas: the EU institutions; EU civil servants; EU-member state relations; and Brexit. He is co-editing a book on *national European Union narratives: the official story*, which explores the meanings that the EU has for different European states through an examination of how governments explain and justify the relationship with the EU, *Negotiating Brexit. EU institutions, national governments, and the UK*, and *coordination at the Top*, which explores core coordination in national administrations and international organisations.

### **Marylou HAMM, College of Europe**

Marylou Hamm is doctor-assistant at the College of Europe (EG) and researcher at the Institut d'Etudes Européennes (ULB). She is also lecturer at the Université libre de Bruxelles, Université Paris-Dauphine and Université Paris-1 Panthéon-Sorbonne. Marylou received her doctoral degree there in 2022 on "*The conditions of Europe. A sociology of European technical assistance in the Greek crisis (2011-2015)*". In her PhD thesis, she analyses the intervention of European staff in the implementation of structural reforms in the context of the macroeconomic conditionality in Greece. Her research now focuses on contemporary European technical assistance to member states, focusing on public administration reforms.

### **Sébastien MICHON, Université de Strasbourg**

Sébastien Michon is Director of Research at the Centre National de Recherche Scientifique (SAGE laboratory, University of Strasbourg). His recent research focuses on the sociology of political personnel and work, and on the sociological conditions of the vocation to the professions of political Europe. He is the author of the book *A l'école des eurocrates. La genèse de la vocation européennes* (2019), and co-author of *Métier : député. Enquête sur la professionnalisation de la politique en France* (2017). He coordinated *Le Parlement européen au travail. Enquêtes sociologiques* (2018), and co-edited *Dans l'ombre des élus. Une sociologie des collaborateurs politiques en France* (2017).

### **Emmanuel MOURLON-DRUOL, European University Institute**

Emmanuel Mourlon-Druol is [Professor of History of European Cooperation and Integration](#) at the European University Institute in Florence, and non Resident Fellow at [bruegel](#). He is Principal Investigator of the ERC-funded project [eurecon](#). His research in international economic history focuses on European monetary cooperation and integration, the development of European banking regulation and supervision, the rise of both global and European economic governance, the international debt crisis of the 1980s and the history of capitalism. He is the author of the book *A Europe Made of Money: the Emergence of the European Monetary System* (2012) and has recently co-edited *Rethinking European Integration History in Light of Capitalism* (2023).

### **Andreja PEGAN, University of Primorska**

Andreja Pegan is assistant professor at the Faculty of Management of the University of Primorska, Slovenia and Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, UK. Her research interests cover strategies towards local governance, regional policies, career trajectories including at the European Parliament. She has researched public governance reforms towards co-creation within the Horizon 2020 project COGOV and the impact of regional policy on European identity in the Horizon 2020 project COHESIFY.

### **Christian SCHMIDT-WELLENBURG, Potsdam University**

Christian Schmidt-Wellenburg is an assistant professor at University of Potsdam and principle investigator in the project "Networks, paradigms and careers in academic fields: German and US Sociology" (funded by the German Research Foundation) at Zeppelin University Friedrichshafen. He received his doctoral degree at Bamberg University in 2012 with the thesis "Governing the firm. The Role of Consultancy in the Changing Field of Management" (UVK). His dissertation was awarded a doctoral prize by the Otto-Friedrich-University of Bamberg in 2013. The focal points of his research include sociology of science, economic sociology, discourse and field analysis, relational sociological theory and methodologies. He notably co-edited the book "Charting Transnational Fields. Methodology for a Political Sociology of Knowledge"(Routledge) in 2020.

### **Martin WESTLAKE, College of Europe, LSE**

Martin Westlake is a Visiting Professor in Practice at the College of Europe and at the LSE European Institute. He has spent over four decades studying European integration and working in European Union government and politics, including as Secretary General of the European Economic and Social Committee (2008-2013). He has published widely on the

European institutions and on European and British politics. He is also the author of a major political biography (*Kinnock, The Biography*).